

*Safety Harbor  
Montessori Academy*



**Student & Family  
Handbook**

**2019-2020**

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## **OUR MISSION**

Safety Harbor Montessori Academy is a community of teachers, learners, and families whose goal is to inspire passionate scholarship and compassionate citizenship, guided by a deep sense of integrity, responsibility, and determination to achieve personal best.

## **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

In order to fulfill our mission statement, our first priority must be to provide an emotionally safe and nurturing environment for all members of our community. To that end, we are committed to providing a developmentally appropriate environment and set of expectations at each level, guided by the basic tenets of Montessori philosophy. Each classroom and the school as a whole are infused with a sense of community, founded on mutual respect. Basic values such as responsibility, integrity, peacefulness, compassion, and an appreciation of the value of work are imparted through modeling, discussion, and daily social interactions.

Our academic program is designed to be challenging, stimulating, and engaging to each student. By finding a match between students' academic abilities and appropriate work, we maximize each student's ability to learn at his or her level of development. Our students learn through discovery and inquiry, constructing their intelligence and body of knowledge through work that provides for authentic feedback without value judgments. Choices in learning encourage students' love of learning and personal involvement in their work. Our goal is to create lifelong learners which is now more important than ever, since we live in an increasingly complex, information-based society. We strive to develop our students' intrinsic motivation, avoiding external controls whenever possible, believing that strong, moral citizens must be guided by an inner voice rather than external approval.

We are dedicated to the Montessori philosophy of education, and to the importance of continuing to develop curricula, integrating new technology when possible, to support, update, and expand on Dr. Montessori's brilliant, more than one hundred year work in progress. We are also committed to integrating new information about the way the brain functions and develops into what is already a neurologically sound approach to education.

Finally, we strive to provide a holistic learning experience that educates students physically, cognitively, morally, socially, and emotionally. To that end, we strive to help our students become independent workers, creative thinkers, strong collaborators, effective communicators, and avid problem solvers. By attending to all aspects of our students' development, we celebrate the inherent value in their humanity, no matter what gifts and limitations they may have.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Safety Harbor Montessori Academy reserves the right to decide, in its sole discretion, whether its programs are appropriate for each child seeking admission. Safety Harbor Montessori Academy's admissions policies are in no way based upon religious, racial, ethnic, political, or socio-economic background. We value diversity in our student population, and we believe that learning to interact with people of varied cultures and backgrounds is one of the most valuable social skills our children can develop.

The following forms are required prior to your child's first day:

Required for ALL Students:

Current School Entry Health Exam Form (from your child's pediatrician)

Current Immunization Record Form (from your child's pediatrician)

Pre-primary & Primary Students:

Emergency Medical Releases (two originals, signed & notarized)

Influenza Virus Form

Enrollment Form

Know Your Childcare Center Facility

Discipline Policy

Rilya Wilson Act Form

General Release

Distracted Adult Form

Additionally Required for Pre-primary Students:

Child Development Questionnaire

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Safety Harbor Montessori Academy believes that all children desire to be productive and in control of themselves. We also believe discipline should include acknowledging the child's contributions, respecting his/her achievements, and encouraging his/her efforts. To that end, our discipline policy is designed to help our students develop self-discipline and self-respect.

Beginning with orientation, and throughout the school year, the children are made aware of appropriate and considerate behavior, and why these are necessary for the enjoyment and harmony of the group. Through gentle reminders and consistent modeling, the children become sensitive to the needs of others and develop a respect for their learning environment. When a gentle reminder is not enough the teacher will intervene, respectfully but firmly, to stop the behavior. The teacher will redirect the child towards a more positive, productive activity so that he/she is able to feel proud of him/herself and his/her accomplishments.

If used consistently, this positive approach to discipline is extremely effective with most children. If a child does not respond, the child's parent(s) will be called for a conference. Through close cooperation between home and school, effective solutions can usually be found.

If a child becomes too disruptive to remain in the classroom, he/she will be taken to the office for a conference with the administrator, and his/her parent(s) will be notified. In the event that a child becomes extremely disruptive, the child's parent/guardian will be notified and required to take the child home from school. For safety reasons, aggressive behavior (i.e. hitting and kicking) will always result in the child's removal from school for the remainder of the day.

While a Montessori environment is normally successful with a very wide range of students, nothing is right for every child. One of our greatest challenges is to be objective and compassionate, yet realistic in considering the needs of each child as a unique individual. When we fail despite our best efforts to work with the child to help him/her meet appropriate behavioral expectations within

the school’s fundamental ground rules, we sadly and reluctantly must counsel the family to seek out another school setting in which the child can experience success.

**Policy on Biting:** While it is our belief that a young child who bites does so without malice but rather as an expression of anger and frustration that he/she is unable to express verbally, it is nonetheless extremely dangerous. A child who bites must be excluded from the group, either temporarily or permanently depending on the severity of the situation. He/she also needs to be soothed and comforted and shown ways to express his/her feelings safely.

**Policy for Middle School:** Students’ behavior must be respectful at all times. Physical aggression or inappropriate physical contact will always result in suspension from school for the remainder of the day. A parent conference with the Head of School will be held in order to determine if further consequences are necessary.

**Policy for Drugs and Alcohol:** Safety Harbor Montessori Academy is an alcohol-free, smoke-free, and drug-free environment. This includes but is not limited to electronic cigarettes, vape pens, and/or vape liquid— whether or not they contain tobacco products.

### **TIME SCHEDULE FOR CLASSES**

Preprimary:  
Mornings 9:05 to 11:45  
Full Days 9:05 to 2:45

Primary:  
Mornings 9:00 to 11:50  
Full Days 9:00 to 2:50

Elementary:  
Grades 1 - 3 8:45 to 3:15  
Grades 4 - 6 8:45 to 3:30

Middle School:  
Grades 7 - 8 8:40 to 3:45

#### Abbreviated Day Dismissal Times:

Pre-primary: 11:45  
Primary: 11:50  
Lower Elementary: 12:15  
Upper Elementary: 12:30  
Middle School: 12:45

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURE**

Please arrive promptly for school. Tardiness is disruptive to the child who is late, as well as to the rest of the class. Upon entering the parking, lot please drive to the back building for elementary

drop-off, to the side gate for pre-primary drop-off and to the front driveway for middle school and primary drop-off. Form one lane in the driveway and pull as far forward as possible. Drivers are asked to remain in their cars at this time, and children should remain in the cars with the doors closed until a staff member comes to open the door and escort them into the building. For your child's safety, never allow him/her to get out of the car or walk into the building alone. (This does not apply to middle school children.) Have your vehicle arranged so that your child is able to exit from the side closest to the curb. If the front car line is full, please loop around the back building driveway.

Encourage your child to be prepared to leave the car promptly. Brief good-byes are usually easier for both child and parent. If your child is reluctant, you may park and walk with your child into the building. Cars may **not** be left unattended in the driveway as it is the emergency fire lane, so be sure to park in a designated parking space.

If you would like to inform the staff of a situation affecting your child, please do so in writing to assure we get the message during this busy time. If a response is necessary we will communicate with you at the first available moment.

Early arrival - if you drop off more than 10 minutes before your child's class begins, your child will be taken to extended care and you will be charged the morning extended care daily rate. If you arrive early and want to wait until the normal class time, please park in a parking space rather than waiting in the driveway where traffic will be blocked.

If you arrive late, park in a designated parking space and walk your child to his/her classroom. Elementary and middle school students arriving late should be walked into the office. They must have a tardy slip in order to enter their classroom after class has begun. It is important to escort your child into the building once the teachers have gone in, as his/her class may have gone outdoors, on a trip, etc. Your child will be recorded as tardy if he/she arrives more than five minutes after the start of his/her class.

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

Again, you will drive to your designated building and form one lane at the elementary building and one lane at the primary and preprimary entrance. Middle school students will be dismissed at the elementary car line in the back. During the first few weeks of school, the teachers may need help identifying children's cars. Preprimary and primary children will be given a color-coded window card for you to display in your passenger window. If you will be carpooling, send a signed note or email to your child's teacher stating whom your child is to ride with. Do not call your child to come from the porch, and explain to your child in advance that he/she must wait for a teacher to take him/her to the passenger side of your car to ensure safety at this busy time. If your child needs your help to buckle his/her seatbelt, please pull into a parking space to assist him/her.

It is very important to your child's sense of well being that he/she is picked up on time. If you know you will be late please call and let us know. Please remember not to leave your car unattended in the driveway, even if you are late. If your child is not picked up on time, your child's teacher will try to reach you. You are considered late if you arrive more than ten minutes after the usual dismissal time, your child will be signed into enrichment care or lunch bunch and you will be charged the appropriate fees.

In case of an emergency that prevents you from picking up your child, please call the school. Children will be released to *Authorized Persons Only*. If you know in advance that a person other than a regular parent or carpool parent will be bringing your child home from school, a note of

explanation identifying the driver and car should be sent with your child. For the children's safety, we will ask for picture identification.

### **SECURITY**

A coded security system is used to prevent unauthorized people from entering areas with children. There will be no admittance at the preprimary and elementary buildings, because they do not have staffed reception areas. **All visitors must sign in at the main reception area and wear a sticker/badge while on campus.** Children who leave early must be signed out at the reception area as well. We will ask for identification of all visitors we do not know personally. Please understand that it takes a while for us to learn parents' names and faces, and we may ask for identification for several months.

### **EXTENDED CARE**

Extended care is available to all full-time primary, elementary and middle school students. Care is available beginning at 7:30 AM and ending at 5:45 PM, whenever school is in session, as well as during professional days. Activities will include cooking, sports and games, homework assistance, animals and nature, and arts and crafts. Days when extended care is not available are marked on the school calendar with an asterisk.

Morning and evening extended care are available to students on a yearly, monthly, or daily basis. Monthly or yearly billed extended care students will pay the discounted monthly rate on the first of each month. This rate will also include care on any school professional days at no extra charge. Daily extended care will be billed at the end of each month. Rates are available for morning, afternoon, abbreviated day and full day for professional education days.

SHMA provides complimentary extended care for siblings of students that must arrive early or leave late due to their siblings' daily arrival and dismissal schedule. Students dropped off or picked up beyond their siblings' normal hours **will** be charged the applicable extended care rate. Students will also be charged for extended care if they attend while waiting for an after-school activity if the waiting time is more than 15 minutes.

If you do not arrive by 5:45 PM, we will begin to call the emergency contacts listed in your child's file. It is very important that you arrive promptly at this time. **In the event that you are late, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed. There are no exceptions to this policy.**

### **PARENT CONFERENCES/ASSESSMENT**

Student assessment conferences will be held in October, January, and May. Additional conferences may be arranged as needed by calling the school office. Progress reports are sent home quarterly. Standardized tests will be given annually in the spring for grades three through eight. Teachers **only** accept telephone calls **after** class time. Feel free to call and leave messages or e-mail and the teacher will respond after the school day is over.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND OBSERVATION**

Safety Harbor Montessori heartily invites all parents and other family members to participate in their children's educational experience. Since the beginning of school is a transitional period we

ask that in-class observations begin after the first six weeks. Teachers will be happy to schedule an appointment for you after that time.

We need your cooperation and support when it comes to visiting and entering the classroom. Students are distracted and interrupted when adults enter the room, and maintaining valuable classroom time is essential for all of our students. It may not seem like much of an interruption to go in for a just minute, or drop off a lunch box, but the cumulative effect is that our students are distracted!

Once the year is well underway, you may choose to visit your child's class in one of the following ways:

- Plan a special presentation demonstrating your occupation.
- Give a cultural presentation.
- Read to the children in the classroom.
- Volunteer in the garden.
- Help with a celebration.

If you are not directly participating in a classroom activity, try to remain in the background so as not to interrupt the natural flow of the class. Always make an appointment with your child's teacher if you wish to visit the classroom.

Becoming involved in your child's education does more than enrich the learning experience. It demonstrates to your child the importance you place on education. Our teachers are eager to hear your ideas, and we welcome the opportunity to make arrangements for your involvement.

### **DIVORCE/SEPARATION/CUSTODY ISSUES**

When parents are separating, going through a divorce, and/or determining custody of their children, they should keep the school informed of all events in writing.

These events can be very stressful to children, so it is essential that the school remain informed, but neutral, in all situations. Our students need to know that their school is supported and respected by both parents and that their parents' conflict will not be brought into their school environment. To this end, SHMA strongly objects to being involved in any custody disputes. Furthermore, it is unfair to all our students and staff to have teachers and staff members taken away from the important work they do with our students in order to testify on very private matters.

If a teacher or staff member is forced to testify or make a statement through a subpoena, a charge of \$500.00 per day will be charged to the student's account. All information pertaining to custody matters must be in the form of an official court order. Students must be released to either parent according to the law in the absence of a specific court order.

### **PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

Any educational issues needing to be resolved should be directed to your child's teacher. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, an appointment should be made with the Associate Head of School. Any financial issues needing resolution and/or clarification should be directed to the Office Manager or the Business Manager.

Head of School  
Business Manager  
Associate Head of School  
Office Manager

Melinda Robinson  
Mark Robinson  
Germaine DiJohn  
Lydia Buening

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

If your family requires assistance beyond the scope of what a school setting can provide, please let us know. We can direct your family to community resources that can assist you with financial, health, emotional, legal, or educational difficulties. Your request will be held in the strictest confidence.

## **LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

Good nutrition is essential to children's healthy development. The food that children eat is the material their bodies use to grow, and it affects their energy level, mood, and general health. Lunches should be wholesome and nutritious. Please do not send cakes, candies, or other sugary foods and beverages to school, or entire packages of food such as boxes of cereal, bags of pretzels, chips, etc. Water, 100% fruit juice, or milk are the preferred beverages. McDonald's, Checkers, and other fast foods should not be brought in for lunch.

Lunches should be packed in a lunch box with a thermos or disposable drink container. A small ice pack will be necessary for foods that require refrigeration. Please supply a cloth placemat and all utensils needed for your child's lunch, and be sure your child's lunch box is clearly labeled with his/her name on the outside. Hot lunch, catered by our middle school students, is also available during most of the school year. More information regarding that program will be sent home periodically.

The school will provide healthy, nutritious snacks each day at mid-morning, as well as in the afternoon for children who attend enrichment care. The children are invited to share in food preparation. Snack time can be a wonderful way to introduce another culture to the children. Anyone interested in sharing a special snack with the class should contact their child's teacher.

Food allergies have become increasingly prevalent, especially among young children. In order to keep all our students safe, the preprimary and primary classes are nut free, and we ask that parents do not send food that contains nuts to school in their children's lunch boxes. Also, treats brought in for birthday celebrations or cultural celebrations should not be homemade and should not contain nuts.

## **PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY & ELEMENTARY DRESS GUIDELINES**

Children should dress comfortably in clothes that are easily cleaned. Please keep in mind that the children may be gardening, working with art materials, or with animals. They will get messy from time to time. Cartoon and TV characters on clothes and lunch boxes can cause a distraction and should not be worn/brought to school. The same is true for light-up shoes. Hats and jewelry, other than small earrings or necklaces, should be avoided because they tend to get lost and can be a distraction in class.

Children should wear shorts or pants that allow freedom of movement, a shirt that can be tucked in, and athletic shoes. Consider having girls wear shorts under skirts and dresses, as they are often active on the playground and during physical education class. Because the children will be playing outdoors most every day, only rubber-bottomed shoes that remain securely in place should be worn. Sandals, clogs, crocs and cowboy boots are not safe on the playground.

Clothing need not be fancy but should reflect that the children are in a learning environment. Leotards, costumes, clothing with inappropriate logos, or otherwise inappropriate attire is not permitted. Spaghetti straps, halter-tops, cropped tops, excessively baggy clothes, and exposed undergarments are not appropriate for school. Skirts and shorts should be worn at a conservative length.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL DRESS GUIDELINES**

The dress and grooming of SHMA Middle School students shall be neat and clean, promoting a positive educational environment. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will be asked to change into a school t-shirt, or their parents will be called to bring appropriate clothing.

Requirements for student dress are listed below:

- A. All shirts and blouses must completely cover midriff, back, sides, and all undergarments including bra straps at all times.
- B. Shorts, skirts, divided skirts, dresses, and culottes are allowed. They must be mid-thigh length or longer.
- C. All trousers, pants, or shorts must totally cover undergarments, including boxer shorts.
- D. All clothing and jewelry shall be free of the following: profanity; violent images, wording or suggestion; suggestive phrases or images; gang-related symbols; alcohol, tobacco, drugs or advertisements for such products.
- E. Safe and appropriate footwear must be worn. Inappropriate footwear includes, but is not limited to, roller skates, skate shoes, and bedroom slippers.

Further Clarification/Other Requirements:

- A. Form-fitting leotard/yoga/spandex type clothing is not allowed unless proper outer garments cover to mid-thigh length or longer.
- B. See-through or mesh fabric clothing may only be worn over clothing meeting requirements.
- C. Clothing must be the appropriate size, with the waist of the garment worn at the student's waist.
- D. Clothing not properly buttoned, zipped, fastened, or with inappropriate holes or tears shall not be worn.
- E. Clothing and footwear traditionally designed as undergarments or sleepwear shall not be worn as outer garments.

- F. Sunglasses may not be worn inside unless a parent provides a doctor's note to the school.

Students should be dressed in clothes that allow for participation in P.E., or they should bring clothes they can change into. Sneakers should be worn or available each day.

### **TOYS AND SHARING DAYS**

Children should not bring toys or other personal belongings to school unless they are specifically requested to do so for sharing days. Suggestions for sharing days are books, nature discoveries, cultural artifacts, and souvenirs. Items intended to provide your child with security, such as a blanket, are permitted. Any other toys or objects, including fidget spinners, will be held at the office until the end of the day. The school will not be held responsible for any personal items that are lost or left at school. Please do not send valuables or non-replaceable items to school.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are intended to supplement various aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the cultural and scientific resources within our community. Parents will receive notice of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip. Permission slips should be signed and returned promptly (or submitted online) or children will not be allowed to participate. Parents will be invited to assist and drive for field trips. We need and appreciate your help in driving and chaperoning the children.

Please remember the following guidelines when driving on a field trip:

1. All children must wear seat belts or be in a car seat in the back seat.
2. Convertibles with the top down or any type of open-air vehicle may not be used to transport children.
3. Stay with the children assigned to you at all times. Please do not allow children to go alone to the restroom or any other place.
4. Drive directly back to school following the field trip. Please do not stop anywhere for snacks or drinks.
5. After the field trip, please walk your children back to their classroom and stay with your group until the teacher arrives.

Lost child prevention:

1. Each chaperone will be given a list of the names of every student in his or her group.
2. Chaperones must have a phone with them in case of an emergency during a field trip. Chaperones must provide this number to SHMA staff members.

3. Students should have a buddy who they stick with throughout the day. Call for a “buddy check” on a regular basis.
4. When you arrive at a venue, pick a memorable meeting spot in case someone gets separated from the group.
5. Chaperones should count their children on a regular basis especially when transitioning from one area to another.

Lost child protocol:

1. Conduct a brief search of the immediate area.
2. Ask the facility to secure all areas and monitor entrances and exits if possible.
3. Provide a detailed physical description of the child and his or her clothing to facility employees and other chaperones who may be helping to search for the child.
4. Notify school personnel.
5. If the child is not found within 10 minutes, call law enforcement.

### **PARENT/SCHOOL/STUDENT COMMUNICATION**

Parents will receive a newsletter from the front office periodically via email. In an effort to avoid wasting paper and ink, any information that can be emailed will be distributed electronically. Please read all information carefully, and respond or return any requested material by Friday of the same week. Watch for announcements on the message boards and our website as well.

We use **Remind** to send text messages to parents who choose to use this service. We will send reminders as well as emergency information this way. To sign up for **Remind**, send a text saying @shmap to (208) 647-3165. Your child's teacher will also set up a **Remind** account specifically for each classroom.

Phone calls and emails from parents to teachers will be responded to within 24 hours. Please understand that teachers must focus their attention on their students during the school day. In order to help our students focus on their work, parent phone calls to students are not permitted during class time. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. Those students who bring their phones to school must leave them in their lockers or cubbies and they must be turned off and on silent mode.

Please be certain to notify the office in writing if you should have a change of address or telephone number during the school year.

### **PARENT EDUCATION**

Parent workshops may be held to introduce you to the Montessori method and philosophy from time to time. We urge all parents to share these evenings with us so that we may work together toward your child's healthy development and education. Following is a brief summary on some of

Montessori's philosophy. For anyone interested in more information, we have included a reading list at the end of the reading.

One basic idea of the Montessori Philosophy is that carried unseen within each child is the person that the child can become. To develop his/her physical, intellectual, and spiritual powers to the fullest, the child must have freedom - a freedom achieved through order and self-discipline. The child's world is full of sights and sounds that at first appear chaotic. From this chaos the child gradually creates order and learns to distinguish among the impressions that assail his/her senses, slowly gaining mastery of self and environment.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called "the prepared environment," among its features is an ordered arrangement of learning materials in a non-competitive atmosphere that helps each child develop at his/her own rate.

"Never let the child risk failure until he has a reasonable chance of success," said Dr. Montessori, understanding the need to acquire basic skills before participating in a competitive learning situation. The years between two and six are those when a child learns the ground rules of human behavior most easily. These years can be devoted constructively to preparing the child to take his/her place in society through the acquisition of good manners, organizational skills, and work habits. Between the ages of six and twelve, the child is able to think abstractly and is engaged and motivated by the imagination. Learning must challenge his imagination in order to be meaningful. Dr. Montessori recognized that self-motivation is the only valid impulse to learning. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, creates stimulating activities, and functions as the reference person and role model for the class. But it is the child who learns, motivated through the work itself, to persist in his chosen task. The Montessori child is free to learn because she has acquired an "inner discipline" from exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Montessori's educational philosophy. Habits of concentration, perseverance, and thoroughness established in early childhood produce a confident and competent learner in later years. Historically, Montessori schools have taught children to observe, to think, and to make judgments. Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand in hand. Through the elementary and middle school years, children in a Montessori environment acquire a strong academic and emotional base, allowing them to grow into capable young adults with integrity, intellectual honesty, and social grace.

## **READING LIST**

Many of these titles and others are available for loan from the school. Please inquire at the office.

A Parents Guide to the Montessori Classroom. By Aline Wolf.

Maria Montessori, A Modern Approach. By Paula Polk Lillard.

Montessori Today. By Paula Polk Lillard.

Punished by Rewards. By Alfie Kohn.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen. By Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

Positive Pushing. By Jim Taylor.

Children Believe Everything You Say. By Jennifer Day.

The Absorbent Mind. By Maria Montessori. (Dr. Montessori's last book about the development of the child's mind.)

The Discovery of the Child. By Maria Montessori. A 1948 revision of some of Dr. Montessori's earlier writings.

From Childhood to Adolescence. By Maria Montessori.

Turning Points. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius. By Angeline Lillard.

## **EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an emergency such as severe weather, a **Remind** text will be sent out to parents. Parents may also tune in to Bay News 9 for an announcement regarding school closing. A general policy pertaining to hurricanes is as follows:

If a hurricane or tropical storm watch is issued school will remain open. If a hurricane or tropical storm warning is issued, school will be closed. A message will be left on the school's voice mail with the latest information on the school's status.

If an emergency arises and children need to be dismissed, you will be contacted by a **Remind** text. In the unlikely event that emergency shelter or evacuation is required, you will find us at Countryside Baptist Church or Leila Davis Elementary School.

## **ILLNESS**

Please keep your child home if he/she shows signs of illness. It is essential that everyone cooperate in this manner to keep the spread of illness to a minimum. An ill child not only unnecessarily exposes his classmates to illness but also is more susceptible to additional illness. We realize that parents sometimes have very pressing schedules that make it difficult to keep children home from school, but alternate arrangements should be planned for since unexpected illnesses are an inevitable part of growing up. The school is not permitted to keep sick children in our care. If your child becomes ill during a school day, you will be contacted so that you can pick him/her up as soon as possible.

Your child needs to stay home from school if he/she:

- Has a fever of 100 degrees or higher.
- Has a contagious disease. (Please inform the school immediately.)
- Displays any of the following symptoms: severe coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, a rash of unknown origin, heavy or discolored mucus discharge from the nose, or unexplained eye redness and/or drainage.

★ Children should be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

These suggestions should aid you in the determination of whether your child should or should not be sent to school. We rely on your good judgment. When in doubt, keep your child home.

### **MEDICATION**

In order for the staff to dispense prescription medication, a parent must sign a consent form. All medication must remain in the original container with a pharmacist's label that indicates the child's name, date, type of prescribed medication, and the amount, method, and time of dosage. The consent form must contain the same dosage information as the pharmacy label. Over the counter medications may be dispensed only with a doctor's note specifying the correct dosage and must be in a new and unopened container. Medication consent forms are available in the office and must be signed for each period that medication is to be administered. Do not put medication in your child's lunch box or backpack, regardless of age! It must be given to a staff member to be placed in a locked container out of children's reach.

Sunscreen and insect repellent should be applied by parents before school, and must not be sent in children's lunch boxes or backpacks. Hand sanitizer can be considered hazardous to children and also must not be sent in lunch boxes or backpacks.

### **FIRST AID**

The Pinellas County License Board has strict rules governing first aid for your child. We are allowed to use bandages, soap, water, ice and TLC that are appropriate to your child's injury. In the event of a serious injury, we will notify parents and your child's pediatrician (if necessary) so that your child can receive appropriate care. 911 will be called in all cases of illness or injury that we are not comfortable handling. If a parent cannot come immediately in situations requiring medical attention, children will be transported to the nearest hospital via ambulance. Parents are responsible for any ambulance expenses.

### **HEALTH/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Parents are urged to provide any information on their child's health that will enable the staff to create an environment that meets the needs of all our students. Raising our awareness of your child's specific needs allows us the opportunity to seek professional assistance should these needs stretch beyond the scope of our staff's expertise.

All children attending a group setting should be properly immunized against certain communicable diseases. It is the parent's responsibility to keep children properly immunized at all times.

In order to prevent the spread of diseases and/or microorganisms, our policy is to wear gloves when attending to open cuts, to keep all open cuts bandaged at all times, and to use frequent hand washing by both adults and children.

Animals that may be present at our school include dogs, miniature horses, tortoises, lizards, fish, hermit crabs, tadpoles, frogs, hamsters, and guinea pigs. All animals are in good health and have appropriate immunizations.

## **ABSENCES**

If you know that your child will be absent in advance, please send in a note or email informing his/her teacher of when and why. If your child is ill and will not be able to attend on a given day, please call the office to let us know. We must have a note on file explaining all absences for children attending grades one through eight. If your child is absent more than 15 days during a school year due to illness, we must have a note of explanation on file from her/his health care provider. Excessive absence or tardiness at the elementary or middle school level may cause the school to deny promotion and/or re-admission for the following school year.

## **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Annual payments are due June 1<sup>st</sup>. Semester payments are due June 1<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>. Monthly payments are due the first of each month, beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> and continuing through March 1<sup>st</sup>. Any unpaid balance over 15 days past due is subject to a late fee and a 1.5% monthly interest charge. Please see late fee schedule below:

Less than \$500 - \$10
\$500 to \$1,499 - \$25
\$1,500 to \$5,000 - \$50
Over \$5,000 - \$100

If for some reason you are unable to make your payment on time, please contact the business office. Your cooperation in this area will allow us to focus our time and attention on education rather than accounting.

If you would like to change your child's attendance schedule or payment plan, you must notify the front office in writing at least five school days prior to the desired schedule change. Upon acceptance of your child's schedule change, a \$50.00 schedule change fee will be due and your tuition account will be adjusted to reflect this schedule change.

## **MONTHLY STATEMENT**

A monthly statement will be issued at the beginning of the month for all accounts with outstanding balances. If you have a question concerning the status of your account, please contact the Office Manager or Business Manager. If you move during the school year please provide the office with your new address.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR A CHILD-FRIENDLY HOME**

\*\*\*Limit television viewing and computer gaming. It's difficult for the real world to compete with special effects, multiple camera angles, and marketing experts. This is true for all age levels.

Have as few rules as possible, but stick to the ones you have. Consistency is the most effective form of discipline.

Store clothes and belongings at a height that is accessible so that your child can be independent.

Make sure a source of running water is within your child's reach.

Allow your child to assist in the preparation of meals and snacks.

Place an appropriately sized broom, dustpan, and cloth within your child's reach so that he/she can clean up after him/herself.

Help your child organize his/her toys and belongings so that everything has its own place. This is especially important in middle school!

Make children feel significant by giving them important jobs.

When possible within the limits of safety, allow your child to suffer the natural consequences of his/her choices, so that he/she can learn from them.

Try to avoid showing your child the easier way. Let your child figure it out for him/herself. This will help your child to feel proud.

Slow down and experience life at your child's pace instead of the other way around. You will be amazed at all the little wonders you have been missing.

Have the patience to allow for short legs, inexperienced fingers, and wandering spirits. Life is complicated, and it takes practice.

Remember that growing up is a journey, not a race. Confidence, inner strength, and integrity must be given time to develop.

*Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. We look forward to sharing the coming year with you, and we invite you to take an active role in your child's education. If you have any problems, questions or suggestions please let us know.*